

Many members of Georgia's delegation in the U.S. House were busy laying blame this week in advance of the possible government shutdown.

"Hopefully history won't repeat itself with Republicans shutting down government again," Democrat Hank Johnson of DeKalb County said, referring to the 1995 federal shutdown. "But it appears that Republican leadership cannot control its tea party flank, which has hijacked the process."

Republican Paul Broun's office lobbed the blame back across the aisle, however. "President Obama and Congressional Democrats continue to offer the same unacceptable 'compromises' which have clearly illuminated their intention to shut down the government," Broun, who represents north Georgia, said in a statement on his website.

House members are expected to vote today on a resolution that will fund the Defense Department through the end of September and keep the rest of the federal government running one more week.

That will allow legislators more time to seek a compromise on spending for the final six months of Fiscal Year 2011.

"If the American people really understood that Republicans want to strip away nearly all federal support for the sick and the elderly, the poor and the hungry ... I think they would be protesting in the streets," said Democrat John Lewis of Atlanta. "One of the first places we can cut is in the defense department where people are proposing spending billions of dollars in weaponry that the Pentagon says they don't need."

But Republican Tom Graves of Ranger said his constituents "deserve the maximum amount of cuts." In particular, he touted GOP proposals for "eliminating funding for Obamacare, eliminating funding for Planned Parenthood, as well as a host of other programs."

Last week, Republicans pushed a symbolic resolution declaring that the budget passed by the House earlier this year and ignored by the Senate would become the law of the land if the Senate didn't act on it.

Democrat Sanford Bishop, who represents southwest Georgia called the move "a distraction" in the midst of the ongoing budget negotiations.

"It does make the conversation difficult," Bishop said Tuesday on a conference call with reporters. "But it's hard to take politics out of politics."

Even as the White House tried to broker an 11th-hour deal to avert a government shutdown, some Georgia GOP members seemed to have moved beyond 2011.

Republican Lynn Westmoreland of Newnan joined the chorus of Republicans applauding the GOP's Budget Committee head, Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, for his proposed 2012 budget, released Tuesday. It promises to cut \$6.2 trillion in federal spending over the next decade, in part by converting Medicare into a program to help individuals buy private health insurance.

"In addition to keeping our promise not to raise taxes on American families and small businesses, the 'Path to Prosperity' addresses the pink elephant in the room that President Obama failed to: entitlement spending," Westmoreland said.

Bishop and fellow Democrat John Barrow of Savannah, who belong to a moderate faction known as the Blue Dog Democrats, put out their own budget proposal last week, urging House members to keep all options open.

"Our goal is to put everything on the table -- tax reform, spending cuts, new accountability measures -- and to start a real conversation with folks on both sides of the aisle about how to get our country back on a fiscally sustainable path," Barrow said.